

Ango - Jos House  
Bukuru via Jos  
July 16, 1943

L-281  
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Dear Family,

On Monday July 12 we left home for the Iddo station, accompanied by Emmanuel our temporary small boy, Josiah the cook, and little Willie (the last had come along for the excitement). Also five bags and a small trunk, thoroughly prepared for a two-week voyage. Bill Burns took us down in our car. We had a compartment to ourselves, luckily. Others didn't. We were just in Kano for lunch, which we had with a couple named Betuel, who are going up to Kano to be a magistrate.

All went well, and before dinner the Betuels and the two of us played Monopoly enthusiastically. So to bed, where

we both managed to sleep fairly well in spite of the odds against us. After lunch (curry, with our own Pabst Blue Ribbon beer, iced). We arrived in Minna on time, strange to say. Previously, we had passed through mango swamps and fairly respectable jungles, as well as Ibadan, the <sup>second</sup> largest city in Africa from the population standpoint. Rather bush, from any standpoint. At Jebba we crossed the Niger river, on a long bridge. There is an island in the middle of the stream, on which stands a famous Tju rock, where they used to sacrifice unfortunates, and still do unless watched closely. The other day, for instance, we read in the paper about a woman's being tried for witchcraft and cannibalism. She had a nasty habit of catching, killing, and roasting small children in the interests of clients who wanted powerful Tju.

L-281 P1v There is a forty-year-old proverb that anything can happen on the Nigerian railway,

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but everything happened to us after we left Minna. A bridge was endangered ahead of us because of a weakened embankment, the rains having been heavy, so we stayed in Minna until midnight that day. We got out (the Betuels, us, and a Captain Noble whom we picked up along the way) and walked about a mile in the moonlight to the local club. It was a thatch-roofed affair maintained by the twelve non-missionary Europeans in Minna. It had a dart board, a paneled bar, and a main card room. We sat around and drank lemon squash while four miners played bridge, and we listened to the other eight white men singing "Roll out the Barrel" in the bar. We left at eleven, and walked back in the cool darkness to the train. The next morning we were awakened by the steward and his tea-tray (thank heaven) at six. We had arrived at the washout. The Down

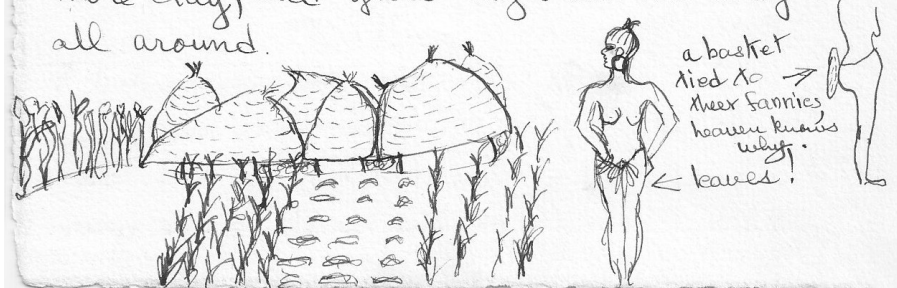
Limited had arrived also, at the other side of the bridge. We (or rather Emmanuel) packed our bags and proceeded to cross to the other train, while the inhabitants of the Down limited switched to ours. 700 yards of terrain that could be used as training ground for Commandos. First a stretch of fair size rocks which I managed to navigate in high heels, then another stretch of six inches deep mud, then an embankment six feet high, also muddy. It started to rain, which ~~also helped~~ <sup>finished off</sup> my high heeled suede shoes. We arrived at our compartment after twenty minutes, rain-soaked, in tatters, and muddy. In our compartment, most appropriately, was a small tract entitled "Words of Comfort and Consolation", left by the previous occupant, a lady missionary. We stayed on the spot till about four p.m., while the boys carried all the freight from both trains over. At six we approached a slight upgrade, and our engine,

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which was weak as a kitten, began an agonizing slowing-up process. Some small naked black boys ran alongside taunting the Engineer. At last the poor old locomotive stopped completely, already 16 hours late. They unhitched the last four cars, took us up to a siding, repeated the process with the other cars, and left us on the siding until after dinner, when it arrived back from Kaduna with another engine. Together they got us <sup>up</sup> ~~back~~ to Kaduna safely. The whole time we were either eating, sleeping, or furiously playing monopoly. We had not bathed since Monday morning, and the breezes wafted in soft coal smoke for four days. We got to Bukuru at three thirty on Thursday, 35 hours late.

We were enchanted to see Mrs. Arnalls, a plump, middle-aged lady in a blue print and a double white felt hat. She piled us into her car (a blue number, same year

as ours.) We climbed over the cool, wind-swept and rocky hills to the Tin Company's establishment. The country around here is completely different from Southern Nigeria. Rocks, enormous and rounded; high, castellated mountains, very sparse vegetation & hardly any trees. Rather like a heatherless northern Scotland. The natives are either Pagans or Hausa. The Pagans wear no clothes, in spite of the chilly cold, cultivate corn and groundnuts, and have no gods except Tuju. They build clay and mud round houses topped by odd-shaped thatch roofs that nearly cover them completely. They cluster these together in a circle, fill in the spaces between with more clay, and grow high cactus hedges all around.



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We were, naturally, incrustated with the soot of four days, weary, and speechless after ~~three~~ nights of only half-hearted sleep. At our destination we were delighted and amazed to find a little verandahed four room cottage, covered with bougainvillea and morning glories, and surrounded by a hedge and a neat rock garden. All this for our exclusive use, for it was a guest cottage only. The Arnall's house is about sixty yards away down a flag-stoned walk, under stone arbors, between for-gloves, hollyhocks, mango trees, Flame of the Forest trees, more bougainvillea, zinnias, and hibiscus. In short, pretty nearly perfect. The gardens cover about two acres of up-hill and down-dale rocky ground around the house, which

is nearly invisible under its staggering weight of vines and flowers. Towering on two sides of the meandering gardens are two separate mountains of enormous boulders, with paths up them and mountain pinks growing in the crevices. We are on a L-281 p4r hill top, and down the slopes are the round, thatched mud houses of the servants. Across a mile-wide valley is another range of barren rocky hills, and indeed everywhere you look are the other ribs of the Jos plateau. We are about 4200 feet up, here, so the sun is warm while the air is cool and clear. The Arnalls have their own cows and sheep and pigs, so there is plenty of meat and milk products; and hidden behind high bougainvillea fences, + the natural outcropping of boulders are rows

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 of corn, cabbages, pea vines, potatoes, lettuce, string beans, what will you have? In the gardens you can pick grapefruit, oranges, mangoes, pawpaw or the trees. Down in the valley there is a little herb garden, and fields of peanuts. The cook, therefore, has plenty of scope, and is excellent in any case. Oh my, I forgot to mention the fowls! There are English hens, native chickens, turkeys, and Guinea fowl. If you are a hunter you can shoot gazelles, Cobs, and hartbeasts in the hills. Home, I regret to state, was never like this.

We were let out at our cottage, and immediately dived into hot baths. We changed, & Emmanuel brought tea in with lovely Huntley & Palmer biquits, and tomato sandwishes. At seven we wandered over, met Mr. Arnall (bird complexion, silver hair),

The head boy (named Obi) brought around whiskey and soda & the bottle of quinine. We listened to the BBC's heartening talk about Sicily, then had a perfectly delicious dinner of fresh grapefruit, fish, steak and onions, a bottle of red Vlaakenberg (South African) wine, topped off with mixed fruit and junket.

(L-281 p 5v) The next day I awoke with a nasty cold, due to the unaccustomed chilly weather. Mrs. Arnall drove us into Ijas, where we visited the native markets as well as John Holt, the U.A.C. store, & the French Niger Trading Co's grocery. We bought some Indian Chutney & Madras Curry powder, which are both hard to get regularly in Lagos. When we came back Mr. & Mrs. Arnall had two pink gins before lunch, but we are not used to it, so we had ginger beer instead. After

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lunch I went to bed with Kleener, Vaper, quinine and aspirin, & slept till supper. Saturday morning was raining, so I had my breakfast in bed, & only got up in time for lunch. The sun came ~~up~~<sup>out</sup>, & Mr. Arnall and the two of us took a long walk over the hills. I was very comfortable in flannel slacks, a sweater and my Swarthmore jacket. We saw a baboon sitting on a rock, idly scratching its head.

Major Heller is up here recuperating from a severe illness, so he and a man named Ed Hymas of Socony Vacuum came to dinner. Roast lamb, corn on the cob, ice cream. I went to bed at eleven to pamper my cold. But we had some interesting conversation about the local Tjue customs. It appears that the Arnalls had a night watchman, a Pagan, who had

to go away for a week. After he left, Mrs. Arnall discovered a hole in the ground right outside the main entrance; in it were some parrot feathers and an old egg. She asked Oki ~~to~~ to fill up the hole & dispose of the decrepit egg. Oki said oh no madam, this is powerful Tjue to keep the house safe. She insisted, so of course the next night the house was robbed of three cartons of cigarettes and a bottle of gin. That morning Oki put the egg back in the hole with the parrot feathers, and all was well.

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So here you have the story thus far. My considered opinion is that 1) This is the life, 2) Tos is a great place to spend the duration in comfort, 3) it would be a pretty nice spot to retire to.

L-281P 7r July 22

We just got Poppa's letter no. 10 and Mama's of June 23, sent up by Anita. Who, by the way, says that the painters are busy destroying that they may improve our apartment. It was high time, because the place was getting quite dingy. I hope also to re-cover the carpet + two of the chairs in Kano cloth, to match the curtains and lamp shades.

Both letters were lovely & most welcome. Re all the delightful things mother has sent over (thank you so much, my dear!) I have just received a letter from one of the girls I worked with in Lisbon, who is still there. I bought and sent her two sweaters

in November 1941, which hurried over to Portugal by pouch & arrived in October 1942. So, as the ships do not come to Lagos once a day and twice on Sundays, there is really not much to worry about yet. William received some Christmas presents mailed in November, some time in April. Happy new Fiscal year, as it were.

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I was surprised and glad to see that you had seen my old friend Donovan. We got along so well, and I thought him a most sympathetic soul. But perhaps his sterling character takes a little revealing, for not everyone liked him so much, since he seems a trifle effete at times.

Last night the Arnalls and we drove out to the Socony Vac. mess for a

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dinner replete with Americanisms. Unheard of items such as tomato juice, applesauce, creamed American canned corn, APPLE SAUCE, ~~an~~ APPLE pie with whipped cream & Kraft cheese. Likewise delicious ham and spinach. Our Boys here at least, are feeling no pain, thank you. Except for searful homesickness. To return to the feast, there are no apples in West Africa, even up here on the cool plateau, where they can grow violets and hollyhocks and healthy European children (and so.). It is reliably stated that <sup>no</sup> apple production of Nigeria has been increased this war year to four (4), recently grown on a missionary tree here near Jos. The reverent said the tree was prayed over, so it wasn't fair on the non-missionary amateur farmers.

To-day we drove over to one of

Mr. Arnall's ~~tin~~ mines, and I found it (L-281 p 8 v) interesting in spite of the fact that I was trying to read your two letters at the same time. The individual mines are simply enormous gouges cut out of the earth at spots where preliminary samples dug up in a long tube show that there is enough tin to merit ~~building~~ <sup>digging</sup> a "paddock", as the gouges are called. The first paddock we saw was being worked by the placer (?) method. A native aimed a violent stream of water at the hillside, and others kept the resultant red-mud streams moving towards the other side of the paddock, where the water went up a pipe to the ground level and then down sluices till the tin-bearing mud sunk to the bottom. Then long files of natives take the mud away in pans on their heads to a magnetic separator. At the second paddock I was impressed by the "Ancient Egyptian" look of the



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 thing. Instead of landslides caused by the loss of water there were neat segments squared off down to the bottom of the mine, with rough steps for the long lines of pan-toting natives to go up + down on. The natives wear only cloths around their middles, and the shape of the sides of the mines were so pyramid-like, that Egypt was in my mind. This method of mining is slower but there is not enough machinery to do it all by the hose-on-the-spot method.

To revert to the letters, I forgot to tell Mamma how pleased I am that she is sending Sandalwood soap. I am using my last cake now, & love it.

We usually have guests

to dinner on an evening. The cooking is so delicious that I am being reluctantly forced to cut down in order to forestall tummy aches. Good food, beautifully served by the two stewards in long white coat shirts with shiny brass buttons, impressive sashes, and white Moslem skull caps. The Arnalls have lovely English silver, and the butter is always done into round balls - just to show you how things are!

L-281 p 1v Last night we asked Obi and Dankoyah, the two head stewards (there are four) where the night watchman comes from. "He be called Maigardi Kano, madam. He come from Kano, same like Lagos, big town, too much big, not like this bush place!" They were

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Amendously impressed by the size and magnificence of the watchman's home town. The watchman is a ghostly figure by night, in flowing robes & turban, always carrying a native spear through the quiet garden.

We took a long walk through the moors & over the rocks this morning. We saw many lovely scarlet birds, and some tiny ones, iridescent black, which hang upside down on flowers and suck the honey. We waved at a procession of two Pagan ladies, each with a baby on her back, a basket on her sanny, and nothing else. I wonder they don't freeze to death. We passed a bank of violets hidden on a rocky hillside, and it was a beautiful blue morning.

This afternoon we visited the Veterinary Station at Vom, saw a horrid

collection of tsetse flies (dead), Black Mambas (likewise) and looked through a microscope at Rinderpest bacilla. We went on to the Dairy, saw a lady making cheese, saw the scientific piggery, & the new Government Veterinary College. The head of the Station is right Sul proud of the fine new buildings, and sad about their students. Each unmarried student gets a good sized neat clean room to himself, four pounds a month plus board during the three year course. The married ones get more money & two rooms plus kitchen privileges. There are two enormous airy mess rooms & two modern kitchens with stewards to wait on them. They have to have two messes because the southern boys won't eat with the northerners, & insist on garie & yams instead of the local chop which is indigorous & therefore cheaper. In spite of these conditions, which an American boy would call idyllic, about a quarter

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 of the students just go away any time they please, wasting their own time & the Government's money. Also, they are forever complaining about ill-treatment (why??), long study hours, difficult exams. They don't complain about the athletic fields, Tennis courts, football coaches, however, which seems strange. Poor old Africans, poor old British.

July 24

Last night we went to the palatial residence of Colonel Jim Foley, the richest man in Nigeria. Tin, as usual. He is a poor Australian by birth. His residence is palatial as heck, but it was so cold you could almost see your breath. The Colonel has one whiskey soda and six pink gin before dinner, and we came to share some of it. I had what they

call a "Shandy", which is half Ginger beer and half real beer. I acquired a passion for beer on the boat coming over because it was so scarce and everyone else liked it so much. It is still so very scarce (at least good beer is) that I am in no danger of getting a beer barrel tummy, but I hate to think of my eventual girth should I ever live where beer flows freely. The only beer (other than a few precious bottles of Pilsner that Mr. Lynch gives us) is Congo beer from Leopoldville. Congo beer is reliably reported to be Hitler's secret weapon, ~~one~~ or two glasses is quite, quite enough. However, mixed with Ginger beer it is palatable. Colonel Jim was amused by the sad saga of our adventures on the Nigerian railway, and re-

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 related the tale of a woman whose train was delayed at Ilorin for several weeks. She asked the conductor whether they could hope to arrive at Kano within the next week or so. Doubtful, replied the conductor. My law terrible, because as you see I am going to have a baby very soon! Well, said the conductor, you shouldn't have gotten on ~~the~~ the Nigerian railway in that condition, my poor woman! I didn't, said she.

We took a long ride out to a place called Barakin Ladi yesterday, where William + Mr. Arnal visited a tin mine while Mrs. A. + I called on an old woman named Cook, who is quite a character. She lives with her tin mining husband in a rambling old house, not at all neat, which is surrounded by a rambling expanse of flourishing

gardens. She screams at her boys, a thing which I deplore, and only keeps two stewards and a cook to do all the work of that big house and garden. We had tea + cakes in a delightful summer house covered with bougainvillea, and Mrs. Cook and Mrs. Arnal discussed all the latest scandals, until that gave out, at which point Mrs. Cook started in to relate gory details of her own lurid past. Although she is now a scrawny whitish-yellow haired old lady, she is said to have been quite beautiful. It started to rain, which event fortunately broke up the L-281 p12r embarrassing reminiscences, and we went in the house. Mrs. Cook shouted at the boy who was standing under the eaves to escape the rain, that he wasn't made of sugar + should continue mowing the lawn. We were only in the house five minutes

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before she ran out again to scream at the boy to mow, for goodness sake, stop wasting time. The poor boy started in for dear life, moving away. In another five minutes she dashed out to shout "Do stop making all that noise, couldn't you know enough not to mow the lawn right under where we're trying to talk?". Mrs. Small says she doesn't keep a boy more than two months, which I can well believe. Her daughter prides herself on not having bought a single new garment to get married in, so the whole family's queer.